(4) A family Welfare-linked Health Insurance Plan will be established. Couples below the poverty line, who undergo sterilisation with not more than two living children, would become eligible (along with children) for health insurance (for hospitalisation) not exceeding Rs. 5000/- and a personal accident insurance cover for the spouse undergoing sterilisation.

(5) Couples below the poverty line, who marry after the legal age of marriage, register the marriage, have their first child after the mother reaches the age of 21, accept the small family norm, and adopt a terminal method after birth of the second child, will be rewarded.

(6) A revolving fund will be set up for income-generating activities by village-level self help groups, who provide community-level health care services.

(7) Creches and childcare centres will be opened in rural areas and urban slums. This will facilitate and promote participation of women in paid employment.

(8) A wider, affordable choice of contraceptives will be made accessible at diverse delivery points, with counselling services to enable acceptors to exercise voluntary and informed consent.

(9) Facilities for safe abortion will be strengthened and expanded.

(10) Products and services will be made affordable through innovative social marketing schemes.

(11) Local entrepreneurs at village levels will be provided soft loans and encouraged to run ambulance services to supplement the existing arrangements for referral transportation.

(12) Increased vocational training schemes for girls, leading to self-employment will be encouraged.

(13) Strict enforcement of Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1976.

(14) Strict enforcement of the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act, 1994.

(15) Soft loans to ensure mobility of the ANMs will be increased.

Blind persons in the Country

1372. SHRI CHO S. RAMASWAMY: Will the MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of blind persons in the country, State-wise;

(b) the main causes for blindness;

(c) the steps being taken to eradicate blindness in the country; and

(d) the steps being taken to set up more eye hospitals in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) There are an estimated 1.2 Crore blind person in the country. State-wise details of blind person is at Statement (*see* below).

(b) Cataract is the pre-dominant causes of blindness. Other main causes include refractive errors, glaucoma and corneal blindness.

(c) National Programme for Control of Blindness is being implemented to reduce prevalence of blindness in the country through

(i) Development of eye care infrastructure

(ii) Training of manpower

(iii) Supply of equipments & consumables

(iv) Assistance to NGOs for free cataract surgery / IOL implantation surgery

(v) School eye screening

(vi) Public awareness on eye care

(d) Funds are released to the states for construction of new wards with dedicated Eye Operation Theaters in the District Hospitals and sub-District Level Hospitals. Non-recurring Grant-in-aid is also released to NGOs for setting up / expanding eye care facilities.

Statement

Prevalence of Blindness and Estimated Blind Persons in India

State	Population (in Lakhs) (1991).	Prevalence* of Blindness /10,000 Pop.	Estimated Blind Persons (in Lakhs)
1	2	3	4
Andhra Pradesh	665.08	150	9.98
Arunachal Pradesh	8.65	123	0.11
Assam	224.14	134	3.00
Bihar	863.74	128	11.06
Delhi	94.21	63	0.59
Goa	11.70	203	0.24

1	2	3	4
Gujarat	413.10	144	5.95
Haryana	164.64	113	1.86
Himachal Pradesh	51.71	87	0.45
Jammu & Kashmir	77.19	280	2.16
Karnataka	449.77	129	5.80
Kerala	290.99	131	3.81
Madhya Pradesh	661.81	201	13.30
Maharashtra	789.37	164	12.95
Manipur	18.37	65	0.12
Meghalaya	17.75	22	0.04
Mizoram	6.90	NA	N.A.
Nagaland	12.10	38	0.05
Orissa	316.60	172	5.45
Punjab	202.82	73	1.48
Rajasthan	440.06	224	9.86
Sikkim	4.06	45	0.02
Tamilnadu	558.59	165	9.22
Tripura	27.57	118	0.33
Uttar Pradesh	1391.12	158	21.98
West Bengal	680.78	96	6.54
Andaman & Nicobar Isl.	2.81	67	0.02
Chandigarh	6.42	189	0.12
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	1.38	NA	N.A.
Daman & Diu	1.02	NA	N.A.
Lakshadweep	0.52	89	0.00
Pondicherry	8.08	NA	N.A.
All States	8463.05	149	126.10

*SOURCE : WHO GOI National Survey (1986-89)

Ignorance about Population Control Techniques

1373. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that South India has done remarkably well about the population control though there was no effective monitoring but a lot of Indian couples who do not want to have more children are still not aware about the population control techniques;